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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, every good and perfect gift comes from You alone. For with You, there is no variation or shadow of turning. May we place our hope in You and never forget how You have sustained us in the past.

Lord, give our Senators the wisdom to trust You in the small things, realizing that faithfulness with the least prepares them for fidelity with the much. May they trust You to do what is best for our Nation and world during these challenging and turbulent times.

And, Lord, bless Ukraine.

We pray in Your matchless Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 15, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a

Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LUJÁN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

HONORING OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS COMPREHENSIVE TOXICS ACT OF 2021—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3967.

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3967) to improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Tester-Moran amendment No. 5051, in the nature of a substitute.

Schumer amendment No. 5065 (to amendment No. 5051), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 5076 (to the text proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 5051), to add an effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

INFLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, American families are being crushed by a giant backdoor inflation tax, and it

has been fueled, in large part, by Democrats' huge mistakes.

Month after month, families pick up the newspaper, flip on the television, and hear that Democrats' inflation is setting new 40-year records.

Month after month, families find themselves shelling out hundreds upon hundreds of extra dollars per month just to actually tread water. Forget about saving and getting ahead.

In this Democrat-run economy, working Americans have to shell out hundreds of extra dollars every month just to remain standing still. Even when you factor in the nominal pay raises that workers have earned, the average American worker got a 3.9 percent pay cut—pay cut—last year due to Democrats' inflation.

According to the Joint Economic Committee, inflation cost the average American household \$635 last month alone—\$635 in 1 month.

For families in Colorado, combined effects of Democrats' inflation and higher household spending put that number at a staggering \$825. In Arizona, it is \$733 extra per month. In Nevada it is \$731. For New Hampshire families, it is \$653. It is \$599 in Washington State, and \$598 in Georgia.

Everybody knows why this is. Food costs are up more than 10 percent, year on year. Gas is up nearly—listen to this—50 percent. Rent is at a 35-year high, and would-be home buyers are being squeezed between high prices and soaring interest rates.

In my home State, Kentucky, that monthly inflation bill comes out to more than \$500 every month.

Right before Senate Democrats spent \$2 trillion last spring, the Democratic leader said he wasn't worried—wasn't worried—about the possibility of inflation. Now, working families are paying dearly for that incredibly bad judgment.

I hear from hard-working Kentuckians who are falling behind on home payments or late on their utility bills

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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